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UNCLAS MONTEVIDEO 000104

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SUBJECT: Uruguay: Engaging on MINUSTAH

REF: STATE 12558

(SBU) Ambassador Nelson met with Defense Minister Gonzalo Fernandez February 11. On Haiti, Fernandez emphasized Uruguay's commitment to the relief effort, and provided the following answers to the questions posed in reftel:

----Firmness: What is the status of each country's offer? What kind of unit/specialization, and what numbers?

Firm. The Uruguayans have offered to send an engineering company of 155 troops.

However, Fernandez said that he learned February 10 that the UN has yet to accept the Uruguayan troop offer. The UN call for 1,800 troops has been oversubscribed, Fernandez continued, meaning that he had to order a halt to departure preparations until the UN confirms the need for the extra Uruguayan troops. Fernandez explained that Uruguay will have to spend approximately USD 2 million in preparation and deployment of the 155 troops, and the GOU cannot commit such a sum of money without being certain that the UN will eventually assume those costs.

Apart from troops, the GOU is sending its largest naval vessel, the Artigas, to Haiti with a load of humanitarian supplies. The Artigas will depart Montevideo February 21 for the eighteen-day voyage, and will be carrying a cargo of water purification machines, large generators, and medicines that the GOU is donating to the relief effort. Fernandez noted that the ship will likely have to offload its cargo in the Dominican Republic, as Haiti's ports will not be sufficiently operational to receive the vessel.

----Sustainability: How long would these forces be prepared to remain in Haiti?

They, or their potential successors, can remain in Haiti as long as the UN is able to pay for them.

----Lift: Do they have sea and/or airlift capacity? What would need to be done in order to speed their deployment?

The GOU is planning to employ contract air to deploy the troops.

The GOU's idea is for the UN to reimburse the cost of a commercial air flight that will ferry the troops and all their equipment to Haiti. There has been no discussion about how the troops will return to Uruguay.

----Enabling: What training or equipment do the forces require to be self-sustaining and effective?

The attached spreadsheet contains the list of equipment needs the GOU presented to the UN for the planned deployment of 155 troops.

----Arrival: When would the forces be operational in Haiti?

On or around April 1, 2010.
Nelson